

## A TIP FROM THE HOUSING CENTER

### Preventing Theft In Your Home

Determined thieves can break into just about any home, but you can take steps to make entry a lot more difficult for them.

- Invest in a quality door. Door security begins not with a good lock but with the door itself and the frame it fits into. Weak door assemblies can be broken with a single kick, popped open with a jimmy bar or even pried out-frame and all-from the wall. Strong exterior doors have solid, not hollow, cores; doors that are sheathed in metal are even better.
- Install deadbolts. Deadbolt locks provide the best protection for the least amount of money. Ordinary spring-operated locks can be defeated with a credit card. Intruders can't slip a deadbolt lock because it has a solid metal bar that fits into the door jamb. To be effective, a deadbolt lock should have at least a one-inch throw (meaning the metal bolt extends at least an inch past the edge of the door). Doors with glass panes present a special security problem because a thief can break the pane, reach inside and unlock the door. If state or local laws permit, the solution is a double-cylinder lock, one that must be opened with a key from inside as well as out. To exit quickly in case of a fire, keep the key near the door but in a spot that can't be reached from outside
- Don't forget windows. Windows and sliding glass doors also should be secured. Look for locks specifically made for different window styles at your local hardware store or home center. You also can secure a sliding glass door with a broomstick or piece of 1" x 2" lumber laid in the door track when the door is closed.
- Light up. Outside flood lighting reduces your risk of burglary by highlighting the exterior of your home at night. You can choose from lights that remain on all night or motion-sensitive lights that come on only when someone approaches your home. Motion-sensitive lights save energy and could catch a would-be thief by surprise. Timers on inside as well as outside lights give the impression that someone is home, even if you're on vacation, out to dinner or visiting the neighbors.

### Sounding an Alarm

For greater peace of mind, consider investing in a professionally installed alarm system. Alarm systems come in many shapes and sizes, at prices that range from a few hundred to several thousand dollars. Many installers also charge monthly monitoring fees, which should be taken into account when you shop for a system

Local police are a good source of information and recommendations regarding security systems. They work with the security services in your area and can tell you what types of break-ins are most common in your community.